

# BRADDOCK DISTRICT COUNCIL *NEWS*

**May 2004**  
**7:30 PM**

## *“Legislative Update”*

### **Braddock District Council Meeting Schedule 2003–2004**

May 11, 2004

#### Agenda

7:30 Welcome and remarks by Chair  
7:35 Comments by Supervisor Bulova  
7:45 Update by members of the Northern  
Virginia Delegation  
8:15 Business Meeting  
9:00 Adjourn

### **Dates of Meetings**

May 11, 2004  
June 8, 2004 Picnic

### **Location of Meetings**

Braddock District  
Meeting Hall  
9002 Burke Lake Road  
Burke, VA 22015

### **From the Chair:**

The General Assembly was locked up in its special session at the time of the April meeting, so as a result, our elected representatives were not available to address the Council. They should be wrapped up in time for them to attend the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to let us know what went right, what went wrong, and what the future looks like with respect to Virginia's financial outlook. So please circle the date (11 May) and talk this up with your communities. It should be enlightening and interesting.

As the Treasurer reported at the April meeting, approximately 35 community associations have paid their dues for the 2003-2004 year. Just a reminder: the year runs from September to June, so if your organization anticipates paying now, you would be paying at the end of the year. The Council is a voluntary “association of associations” and no neighborhood has to join. However, there are many benefits of active membership:

1. It provides an excellent way to keep informed of important issues in the Braddock District and in the county as well.
2. It provides an education on how the County government works.
3. It provides a way to bring issues (either neighborhood specific, or perhaps with broader impact) directly to Supervisor Bulova and fellow association leaders. You can share “best practices” of association governance and gain allies for a cause.
4. It provides members with the ability to get their neighbors involved with task forces, committees, and appointed positions, thus influencing County policy and programs.
5. It provides a forum for guest speakers from County departments and agencies, as well as other key community organizations, to explain their missions and programs.
6. It provides a means of recognition of community volunteers through the Citizen

of the Year Award and, in conjunction with Supervisor Bulova's office, the "Best of Braddock" awards.

7. You get to meet, work with and even socialize with a great group of people.

There are an estimated 240 community associations, civic associations or homeowner associations in Braddock District. Although their purposes and powers differ, depending on their charters, they are all mini-governments, the most 'grass-roots' examples that I can think of. The BDC can help these mini-governments flourish, but only if they participate. If your association is not an active member, you are not receiving the benefits of membership. You are also letting the active members subsidize such things as the monthly newsletter, the awards program and the annual picnic.

I encourage those associations who are not actively involved to discuss it. All it takes is a small commitment of time on the part of someone from your neighborhood, and a small check (no one pays more than \$25 per year to belong, and most associations pay less than that). We could be even more effective if YOU were a member!

See you at the May meeting.

Bob Cosgriff, Chairman

### **SUPERVISOR BULOVA'S CORNER**

Included in this issue of the Braddock District Council newsletter are nomination forms for two programs designed to recognize and thank individuals and organizations that have made a positive difference in our Braddock community. Please talk with your board and neighbors about potential nominees for **The BOB's** (Best of Braddock Awards) and/or **Braddock District Citizen of the Year**. Winners will be honored at our very popular BDC Picnic scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup> at Braddock Hall (next to my office which is adjacent to the Kings Park Library). The food is always great and the ambiance outstanding!

- By now, the dust should be settling over the **County's FY 2005 Budget**, which was adopted unanimously on Monday,

April 19<sup>th</sup>. Not so, however! As I draft this *Supervisor's Corner*, Richmond is still engaged in contentious debate over their biennium (FY 2005 – FY 2006) budget. To bring things into focus for what that means to us, I'll start with a brief summary of our Board's actions.

### **The Board of Supervisors "Marks-up" the Advertised Budget And Unanimously Adopts the County's \$2.7 billion FY 2005 Budget**

When the County Executive began preparing his recommended budget last fall and winter, our county was stalled in the fourth year of a trend of residential real estate assessments increasing by double digits, while all other sources of revenue were down or flat. In FY 2005, revenue from all non-residential real estate taxes combined was projected to be a decrease of \$1 million from the year before.

The County was petitioning the General Assembly for equal taxing authority with cities and towns (i.e. an increase in the cigarette tax, the transient occupancy (hotel/motel) tax and a meals tax) that could help us to significantly reduce our reliance on real estate taxes (now making up 60.7% of our budget) through revenue diversification.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, after two months of hearing from our constituents by mail, e-mail, phone calls, visits, community gatherings and public hearings, the Board of Supervisors collectively amended ("marked-up") the Advertised Budget to reflect what we heard.

As we reached the end of the process, we had some good news in that the economy (and thus our revenue picture) is finally beginning to brighten a bit. The bad news is that we have not been granted the equal taxing authority we sought (with the exception of the Transient Occupancy tax). The worst news is that the General Assembly had not adopted a budget at all, leaving us in a state of some considerable uncertainty.

The **County's FY 2005 Budget** our Board adopted consisted of the following:

- A 3 cent reduction in the real estate tax rate, from **\$1.16 to \$1.13**
- In accordance with the Board's Guidelines, an **increase in the School Transfer of \$81.5 million, or 6.57%**. The combined transfer for School operating and school debt service is 53% of the County's Budget. Additionally, the Board directed the establishment of a reserve as part of the FY 2004 Carryover Review (in September) for a replacement reserve program to assist the Schools with replacement of school computers and buses.
- **\$12.6 million in reductions from the County Executive's Advertised Budget, including \$5.8 million in Agency Expenditures**, chosen with care in order to protect the quality of life services and programs that our constituents value, celebrate and rely upon.
- **Three fees that allow us to diversity revenue and reduce our reliance on the real estate tax:** An **Athletic Services Application Fee**, \$1.7 million, with the implementation criteria revised to reflect discussions with the athletic organizations; an **EMS Transport Fee**, \$740,000, which would be implemented later in the fiscal year in order to provide sufficient public outreach, education and coordination with appropriate agencies and organizations; a **Transient Occupancy (Hotel/Motel) Tax**, \$5.2 million.
- The **most up-to-date projections** to reflect improving economic conditions:  
FY 2005 Revenue as detailed in late March - \$11.4 million  
FY 2004 and FY 2005 Revenue estimated in mid-April - \$12.9 million
- The establishment of a **new "Scholarship-based" Reserve for job training and opportunities for Mentally Retarded Graduates** of our public schools in the amount of \$500,000. This program, based on need and circumstances, replaces an

existing program and will be established with the involvement of affected families, advocacy groups, the CSB, the Human Services Council and other appropriate agencies and organizations.

### **What About The State Budget??**

The County's budget assumes **"status quo" funding from the state** in the amount of **\$677.8 million**. Of that amount, \$332.8 million goes to the Schools. \$206 million is for reimbursement from the state of the phased-out portion of the personal property (car) tax.

- For the **County (non-School) Budget:**

**The Governor's Budget Bill** – would have meant \$6 million more, especially for law enforcement/community policing.

**The Senate Budget Bill** – kept that increase.

**The House Budget Bill** - took that increase away.

- For the **Fairfax County Public School Budget:**

**The Governor's Budget Bill** - gives the Schools an increase of \$19 million. The Schools have incorporated that increase into their budget.

**The Senate Budget Bill** - gives the Schools an increase of \$53 million in addition to the \$19 million included in the Governor's bill.

**The House Budget Bill** - gives the Schools only \$5.5 million over the \$19 million included in the Governor's bill.

**The Senate/House Compromise Bill** that is being debated is a revenue bill and does not indicate any allocation.

What will happen and when? With the State's "status-quo" **\$677.8 million being intrinsic to our budget**, the County faces great difficulty as our next fiscal year nears (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004) and some critical dates are approaching. On May 24<sup>th</sup> the

School Board is scheduled to adopt their budget. June 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for teachers to sign contracts for the next school year. June 7<sup>th</sup> is the final deadline for Real Estate rates to be adopted in order to comply with State Code requirements.

Delegate Jim Dillard has said that he is hopeful that a compromise might be reached within the next few weeks. Senator Saslaw believes things could drag on into the fall. If the state does not rise quickly to meet its responsibilities, the County may be forced to consider drastic reductions to County and School services and programs and/or to rescind the tax rate reduction which this Board is committed to. Stay tuned!

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova

## SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

I am sure that many of you have read the information about the school budget presented last week by Dr. Brad Draeger, interim Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools.

The information lists certain steps that the school system will take if a state budget is not reached by a series of different dates.

By state law, school boards must pass a balanced budget by June 1<sup>st</sup>. At this point in time, we as a school board and school system have no idea what our income from the state will be for next year. And while the portion of our budget which is funded by the state is relatively small on a percentage basis, we had anticipated \$337.1 million of state funding.

I am optimistic that a state budget will be passed. However, it would be irresponsible for us as a School Board not to have a contingency plan in place in the event the state does not pass a budget.

In case you did not see the steps which are being considered, I have excerpted them here.

1. Summer school registration, originally scheduled to begin May 10, will be delayed until June 1. If there is no state budget by June 1, summer school for elementary and middle school students will be canceled, except classes mandated by IEP or SOL remedial classes (including 11th and 12th grade students). *Because we are pushing this decision as late as possible, summer school, once canceled, can NOT be restored, even if a state budget is subsequently passed.*
2. If there is no state budget by July 1, all 2004-05 extracurricular programs will be suspended. Community use of school buildings and grounds will also be suspended. *These items will be reinstated, where possible, if a state budget is subsequently passed.* Eligible employees will receive their regular step, but all other employee initiatives, including COLA, and restored step, will be delayed until the state passes its budget.
3. If there is no state budget by August 1, plans will be made for a one-week delay of school opening and/or a substantial increase in class size. That will mean employees will be furloughed during school closure. *These items will be readjusted if a state budget is subsequently passed, depending on timing.*

Again, I want to emphasize that no one wants to move forward with these steps. I remain optimistic that the state will pass a budget prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. But in the event they do not, we will move forward to implement the plan listed above. State law requires a balanced budget.

Tessie Wilson

Braddock District School Board Member

## LAUREL HILL NEWS:

The Task Force has invited the presidents and facilities officers of accredited colleges and universities and cultural/historical organizations from Baltimore to southern Virginia to attend a meeting on 30 April to discuss possible

educational/cultural uses for the Central/Maximum site on Silverbrook Road. We hope for a good turnout. There is a questionnaire for those institutions that cannot attend. This data will be combined with all the other inputs we have received from the public and professional studies to help frame recommendations to the BOS. At this point, we anticipate working on the recommendations over the summer.

The TF continues to speak to civic groups. On 19 April, I joined TF Chair Tim Sargeant in addressing the Lorton Historical Society. I used the recent Oak Hill preservation effort as an example of how local historical and preservation groups can work to create successful partnerships to protect sites of historical importance. It's one thing to 'talk the talk' that everything must be preserved. It's quite another thing to 'walk the walk' and come up with the plan (and, more importantly, the money) to make it happen. This is the big issue at Laurel Hill: who's going to write the check? The goal is to keep the burden off the taxpayers. This will require lots of coordination among conservancy groups, private developers and the County government to find creative, financially self-sufficient ways to make the promise of Laurel Hill a reality. If you have any ideas which might advance this goal, please contact me at (703) 764-0720 or [bandjcoz@cavtel.net](mailto:bandjcoz@cavtel.net). For Laurel Hill updates, please go to the County website ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)) and search for "Laurel Hill" or go to Planning and Zoning and find the Laurel Hill link.

## BRADDOCK DISTRICT COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the April meeting will be posted on the web when available.

The Braddock District Council of Community Associations (BDC) provides a forum for representatives of residential community associations to express their views on major issues of common concern. The BDC is a section 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation, with geographic boundaries coterminous with the Braddock magisterial district. Meetings of the BDC are open to representatives of all homeowner, tenant and civic associations in the Braddock District. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August. The mailing address is:

c/o Braddock Supervisor's Office  
9002 Burke Lake Road  
Burke, VA 22015-1608

The Office telephone is 703-425-9300.

Chairman	Bob Cosgriff (Hickory Farms) 703-764-0720
Vice chair	Janyce Hedetniemi (Oak Hill) 703-978-8095
Treasurer	Ivan Dietrich (Woods of Ilda) 703-323-1881
Recording Secretary	Jeff Nolan (BonnieBrae) 703-426-4761
Corresponding Secretary	Brenda Cammauf (Heritage Court)

Internet address:  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/bd/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/bd/)

**Members who receive the BDC Newsletter by E-mail will not receive it by snail mail. To receive the newsletter electronically, please contact Supervisor Bulova's Office at 703-425-9300.**